THE ANTI-AHMADIYYA STANCE

OF GENERAL ZIA IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF POLITICAL CRISIS IN PAKISTAN

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INSIDE PAKISTAN: THE BACKGROUND OF THE ANTI-AHMADIYYA ORDINANCE NO. XX of 1984

The following is an analysis of the background to the Presidential ordinance No. XX promulgated by General Zia on 26th April, 1984. It constitutes an attempt to underline the reasons behind its enactment, together with a brief account of those chiefly responsible for instigating it.

AN ATTEMPT TO FOMENT ANTI-AHMADIYYA AGITATION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN:

General Zia has been desperately trying to fan anti-Ahmadiyya sentiments and to create a mass movement against Ahmadis for the last eighteen months or so. Raja Zafrul Haque, Minister for Information and Religious Affairs, has been employed as the main instrument for this purpose.

MUFTI MAHMOOD GROUP AND THE AHRARI ULEMA:

The tool employed for this purpose by the Government has been mainly the Mullahs* of a certain school, known generally as the Mufti Mahmood group. Although the orthodox Mullah in Pakistan does not enjoy any positive influence over the masses, he does have a history of possessing a strong potential for exerting a negative influence over the illiterate or semi-illiterate masses. In keeping with its traditional role, the Mufti Mahmood group is prominent only among this class of people.

In the North Western Frontier Province of Pakistan, they enjoy a good measure of this negative influence over a small but strategically important belt in the West of the NWFP, bordering on Afghanistan, and running down to Fort Sandeman, Lora Lai and Zhob in Baluchistan. This group has always had a close association with the old Red Shirts of the NWFP. The aforementioned Red Shirts, known at present as the defunct National Awami Party (NAP) of the NWFP enjoy a sizeable following in the same Pathan belt running down to Baluchistan. It is an area in which Russia has some strategic interests.

The NAP has also a small following in the Punjab under the leadership of Mr. Sherbaz Mazari. The NAP and the ex-Red Shirts had

*A term used to describe extremely dogmatic and intolerant clergy.

links with the Soviet Union in the pre-partition days of the Indo-Pakistan sub-Continent. During every political crisis so far, the NAP and the Mufti Mahmood group have always worked together and have remained strongly allied.

RIGHTISM:

When one speaks of the said Mullah as "Rightist", the term "Rightist" does not mean a political 'Right' in any sense of the word. It applies only to the narrow field of religious ideology, that is, a section of the Ulema, who are extremely dogmatic and intolerant, advocating the use of the sword in spreading their faith and suppressing any religious opposition to their own peculiar brand of Islam. The limited field of their knowledge, which is entirely divorced from modern age of enlightenment, does not admit or approve of modern sciences. They are completely unaware of the socio-economic questions which agitate the minds of men today. To conceive of an economic philosophy based on the dictates of the Holy Quran or to visualise an Islamic social order applicable to contemporary human society, is as far away from their reach as fermaments of Heaven were from the reach of their medieval predecessors. They deny themselves progress even in the limited field of the religious knowledge of their choice and prefer to live in the past, many a dark century away from the present. As regards economic philosophy, they have none; therefore they have no capability to confront scientific socialism on any ground. They even lack awareness of the existence of such a problem. Having a long history of hatred of the West, particularly the British, on which Russia has also been capitalising in the past, their political philosophy begins and ends there.

In view of this, they have always been ideal tools in the hands of the Soviets to be employed in areas where religious sentiments are dominant. This explains their strong links with some elements of the ex-Red Shirts. This alliance has stood the test of time until recently, and has never been impaired except for some recent signs to the contrary.

THEIR FIELD OF INFLUENCE IN THE PUNJAB:

In the Punjab, this group of Ulema enjoys some measure of strength in the Districts of Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan, both areas being adjacent to Dera Ismail Khan, the home district of the late Mufti

Mahmood. Yet the majority of the inhabitants of this area follow a different creed to theirs, adhering to the Brelvi sect. Their main potential for mischief-mongering, however, lies in various small or middle sized towns of the Punjab, where most of the refugees from the East Punjab are settled. These followers of the Mufti Mahmood group who hail mainly from the Districts of Jullundur, Hoshiarpur and Amritsar (now part of India), are better identified as Majlis-e-Ahrar or the Ahrar of the Punjab. Mostly, they belong to the same religious sect as the Mufti Mahmood group, i.e., Deobandi sect, but they are also joined by the Ahle Hadith and some stray followers of other denominations. The Majlis-e-Ahrar of the Punjab comprises these factions, welded together into one religio-political group. The founder of the Majlis-e-Ahrar, Chaudhry Afzal Haq, is widely acclaimed as the first Muslim communist leader in the Indian sub-continent, a fact which he admitted with unconcealed pride. The role of the Majlis-e-Ahrar has always been negative and they have never enjoyed any positive or healthy influence over any section of society in the Punjab. Permit them to feed on anti-Ahmadiyya sentiment and they will swell to enormous and threatening size, gaining temporary popularity amongst the uncommitted illiterate gullible masses of the towns and cities. Deprive them of Ahmadiyya blood, and they will shrink to an insignificant size and ultimate oblivion. Both these wings, i.e., the Mufti Mahmood Group in the NWFP and the Majlis-e-Ahrar in the Punjab, have the following features in common:-

a) Both hail mainly from Deobandi or Ahle Hadith sects;
b) Both have strong Russian ties;
c) Both have strong links with the Indian National Congress;
d) Both were bitterly opposed to the creation of Pakistan, and were committed enemies of Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Founder of Pakistan whom they publicly abused in vulgar terms and ridicule and obstructed his struggle for Pakistan;
e) Both put together, make the mount which General Zia is riding today.

Although other strong religious denominations have shown hostility to Ahmadiyyat from time to time, in the present context, none except the above-mentioned is playing into the hands of Zia.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ZIA:

As for the political parties, they are all without exception keeping clear of Zia, lest they be dubbed as his lackeys and tools. The only party however, which enjoyed until recently some participation in the affairs of the Government, was the Jamaat-e-Islami Tufail* Group, but now this faction, too, has fallen foul of Zia; at least so they claim. They are not accepted by the rest of the parties however, as genuine in their claim, and are treated with grave suspicion. Some say it is a puppet show. There are others who believe that they turned coat just in time when the hunter was about to become the hunted.

One of the most sensitive religious issues in Pakistan on which sentiments are known to have been agitated to a volatile pitch, is the Ahmadiyya issue. The present movement also began, as it always did in the past, with a barrage of grave allegations against the Ahmadis, gradually and systematically worked up to the pitch of a crescendo. The Ahmadis were painted black with every imaginable crime and wildest allegations were levelled against them. They were claimed to be number one enemies of Islam and of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him; traitors to both Islam and to the country; planted by the British to oppose the doctrine of Jehad — the 'holy war' waged against the infidels. Also they were alleged to have sabotaged the cause of Islam by denying the absolute finality of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. That is not all. They were also dubbed as Jewish agents, American agents, Russian agents, and Indian agents, all at once in the same breath. The language became filthier and filthier with the passage of time, and the expression became so uncouth as to put to shame the foulest invectives of the underworld. Day in and day out, night after horrid night, the masses were incited to loot, to commit arson, and murder the Ahmadis. The warnings to the Government by the agitators became progressively sterner, culminating in ultimatums that unless their foul demands were accepted within a specific period, the Ulema, with the help of the masses, would murder every Ahmadi man, woman and child, and burn their properties and demolish Ahmadiyya mosques, which they preferred to call "places of worship". They also preached razing all Ahmadi houses to the ground, as if this

*The leader of this group Mian Muhammad Tufail hails from the same district as General Zia (Jullunder) and has tribal and family ties with him.

could mean anything to Ahmadis after they had been murdered en-masse!

Obviously, all this cannot be tolerated by any civilized government in any civilized country. Any modern government is fully capable and equipped to nip such mischief in the bud if it really wants to. But there is a big "IF" involved. By studying the Enquiry Report of Justice Mohammad Munir* after the 1953 anti-Ahmadiyya riots, one can understand the mechanics and modus operandi of such an agitation; how it is directed and helped to gain momentum and allowed to grow into an avalanche of sinister proportions. The Munir Enquiry Report can be summarised into one sentence:

> "Such diabolical and inhuman movements cannot take a single step forward without the connivance and full support of the Government."

THE PRESENT MOVEMENT WITH A DIFFERENCE:

The present movement against Ahmadis had the same essential features and general character with only one big difference. This time the Government, despite its best efforts, failed to achieve the desired results. The masses did not respond. There was no popular movement whatsoever except the one projected in the Government-controlled press, TV and Radio network. It was only a paper-tiger on the rampage.

THE MOTIVATION:

The course that Zia has adopted for himself and seems determined to pursue further, is rather complicated for a casual observer to comprehend. He is not so naive as to miss the obvious fact that his politico-religious philosophy is absolutely incompatible with modern times. Without total disregard to world opinion, he could not therefore have adopted the course he has so audaciously chosen to follow.

One plausible explanation which emerges is that for the last few years, Zia has been under constant pressure from the West to hold elections, and give an air of democratic respectability and legitimacy to his

*Justice Munir was the Chief Justice of the High Court of Punjab and headed a *Judicial Enquiry* into the Anti-Ahmadiyya riots of 1953. He retired as the Chief Justice of The Supreme Court of Pakistan. He also held the portfolio of The Minister of Law in the Federal Government of Pakistan.

dictatorial rule. But how? That was the main problem for Zia. If there was a free and genuine election, he would be completely routed. Except for a section of the Mullahs described above, rest of the people including the remaining factions of Mullahs are all strongly opposed to him, a situation which he cannot even attempt to change, however strong may be his desire. The Brelvis, the majority group of the Mullahs, are fundamentally opposed to the Saudi Arabian brand of Islam, which is much closer to the Ahle Hadith and the Deobandis. Apart from the fact that Zia, the son of a 'Maulvi', belongs to the Deobandi group, his political and economic dependence on Saudi Arabia would not permit him to hob nob with the Brelvis, who are totally unacceptable to the Saudi Arabian regime. There is no room for any compromise here.

So is the case of the Shiite sect. With the background of the Iranian Revolution, Shiites are not tolerated and trusted by Saudi Arabia. That is why it is broadly hinted in Pakistan that the violent anti-Shiite disturbances which occurred last year (in 1983), had a tacit government blessing, even its connivance. The Shiites registered the message of course; so did Saudi Arabia and Iran. Thus the entire religious platform, it seems, has been swept away from under the General's feet. On top of this, he does not enjoy the full support of a single political party. His main problem, therefore, is to establish his credentials as a popular hero. For a long time now, he has been posing before the West as the only champion of the 'Rightist' cause, and as the 'Rightist' sentiment rules supreme in Pakistan, he represents the popular will. But how to prove it? That was his dilemma.

The only course therefore left open to him was to try his hand at the Ahmadiyya issue, which he erroneously believed, was still as live and sensitive as it had been in the past. So he tried his luck and failed. Yet to cover his failure, he succeeded in painting the image of a violent mass movement against Ahmadis in the news media, which is almost entirely Government-controlled.

Fearful as the Western Powers are of the slow but steady progress of the Russian Bear towards the vast oil fields of the Middle East, how ready and willing they would be to accept the assistance of a regime, which in all appearance, is riding the popular sentiments of 'Rightism', and seems capable of halting this dreaded march!

That is one angle of looking at it but there is another angle too. Suppose, the West is not prepared to fall for this game any more. What then? Can Zia beat a retreat from power? Can he afford to do that while Mrs. Nusrat Bhutto and other Bhuttoists are lying in wait for just such a moment; to pounce on him and take revenge.

There was absolutely no way out in any direction indeed. Desperation was the only answer. But how could desperation be translated into a course of action? The answer to this question varies from person to person. Personal survival would be the decisive factor and no holds would be barred. The lower, one stooped morally in such circumstances, the higher would be his reach. In the case of some, the sky's the limit.

THE MULLAH AND THE POLITICIAN: A HOPELESS STRUGGLE

The Mullah's meteoric rise to a position of holding formidable political power from the abject position he occupied previously, i.e., subservience to the village elders and wielders of politics, is a phenomenon of colossal import for Pakistan. It is surprising that the politicians ignored this phenomenon, and never attempted seriously to analyse the underlying factors and horrendous consequences. Only recently, some of them have just begun to realise, but alas, a fraction too late perhaps, or may be just a split second before the final plunge from the edge of the precipice.

The first and foremost person among them to perceive it, who also had the will and courage to warn others of what he perceived, was Mr. Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, a stalwart from Baluchistan. Unfortunately, the qualities of clear vision and courage to speak out the truth, are seldom found combined together except among a few politicians of rare quality and calibre. Now that someone has spoken up and has set the ball rolling, others are also beginning to follow suit. Yet they are cautious and wary of the Mullah. Cry 'Mullah', and some would be transfixed, shaking where they stood and some would scurry back frightened and in deep conflict with their conscience. There are exceptions among them of course, like the formidable Mr. Sher Muhammad Khan Marri, and Mrs. Wali Khan, a lady of steel nerves. Mr. Qaswar Gardezi, a political leader of the Punjab, is a double exception to the general run of the politicians who have taken up the

cudgels against the Mullah. Belonging to an area extending from Multan to the farthest borders of Bahawalpur, which has produced an outstanding crop of shrewed politicians who excel in the gift of judging which way the wind is blowing, Mr. Gardezi has shown vision and courage to follow the war-path set against the Mullah by Mr. Bizenjo. Yet, how true it is to say that one swallow or even a dozen of them, do not make a summer.

THE FEAR OF THE MULLAH. WHY?

Let us now examine the whole issue more closely to determine what talisman the Mullah is swaying over the head of the Pakistani politician. It is the magic word "AHMADIYYAT", or "Mirzaiat/Qadianiat", as the Mullah would prefer to call them in a derogatory sense. It is a long tale of struggle for ascendancy between Mullahism and the politician, which came to a head once before during the Pakistan Movement in 1946-47. Then the Mullah was completely and utterly routed at the hands of Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who was opposed tooth and nail by the Deobandi-Ahrar Congress axis on one hand, and Jamaat-e-Islami-Congress axis on the other. The Ahmadiyya issue was extensively raised against him, but he stood firm and unbending, and did not budge an inch from his chosen and principled path.

QAID-E-AZAM AND THE MULLAH

After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the Mullah remained in hiding for a while licking his wounds. Then slowly he began to move towards Qaid-e-Azam with a view to rapprochement. All that the Mullah wanted in return for his whole hearted support was an announcement by him to the effect that the Ahmadis be barred from becoming members of the Muslim League on the grounds that they were not Muslims. But Qaid-e-Azam would have no truck with them, and was so categorical in rejecting their advances that, in the words of the late Ataullah Shah Bokhari, "they (i.e., the Ahrar Ulema) were ready to polish his shoes with their beards, but the stone hearted man rejected and spurned their gesture with contempt." The Qaid-e-Azam knew better. He knew, and how right he was in his assessment that permit the Mullah an inch in the political arena, and he would expand and swell to the ultimate expulsion of all others. The Qaid-e-Azam's greatness lay in the fact that he chose

to defeat them on their strongest ground — i.e., the Ahmadiyya issue. He, the Mullah, was thus banished from politics, and remained so during the Qaid's lifetime. After his death in 1948, the country fell into the hands of lesser men who were no match for the Mullah. Once again, the Mullah re-entered the political arena wielding the sword of the Ahmadiyya issue so threateningly and ominously with loud war cries that it terrified the beholder.

It all began in the Punjab during 1952-53 under the Muslim League government headed by Mr. Mumtaz Daultana. The government seemed totally ineffective, even disinterested, in stemming the rot. To all appearances, it was a one-sided battle geared in favour of the Mullah. Only later, during the famous Munir Enquiry, it came to light that the whole affair was actually concocted and stage-managed by the then Chief Minister of the Punjab Province Mr. Daultana himself for his own personal political ambitions. A great politician as he was and still is, he must have regarded Qaid-e-Azam as a very naive person, though a strong leader, who succeeded not by understanding the highly complicated game of politics, but merely because of his exceptionally strong will, aided by a favourable wind! Had Mr. Daultana been in Qaid-e-Azam's shoes, he would certainly have exploited the might of the Mullah in his favour instead of rejecting it. Little did Mr. Daultana realise at that time, and would be loath to admit even today, that by exploiting the Mullah, all that he did succeed in achieving was the historic distinction of possessing the hand that unbottled a genie which would never return to the bottle again!

Great politicians before him, no lesser than Mr. Daultana himself, had tried their hands and failed miserably to control and stem the fury of the Mullah once it was unleashed. Once admitted into the arena of politics, he came to stay: now employed by his countrymen, and now by the enemies of his country. The Abbasides followed the same path as had been trod by the once great Moors of Andulusia. Nothing remains of those great empires except the spectre of the Mullah, which still haunts the ruins of those once great Muslim Empires.

GENERAL ZIA AND THE ASCENDANCY OF THE MULLAH

Enough harm has already come Pakistan's way. But God forbid, if

the country is at least to be undone — as indeed people have already started to express fears — there will always be remembered some illustrious names, not the least among them that of General Zia. To his credit will go the feat of bringing the once great professional army of Pakistan under the spell of the Mullah. Gone are the days when the Mullah was looked down upon by even the lowest of the commissioned officers. Now the highest ranking among them is treated with scant respect by an ordinary Mullah. It is Zia who has created the atmosphere where to be dubbed a "Mirzai/Qadiani", is so terrifying a spectacle that even the brave shudder to face it. Even the Chief Martial Law Administrator is no exception to the rule. He would go to any length to demonstrate his hostility towards Ahmadis to rebut the allegation. Such is the state to which the General has reduced the armed forces of Pakistan. The menial and the master have changed their respective roles. Alas! there comes a time in the history of nations when it is a blessing not to be gifted with vision.

ZIA'S ULTIMATE GOAL:

Apparently a strong dictatorial rule, supported by a system of complete regimentation, seems to be Zia's ultimate goal.

Although time is short for him to devise and implement a faultless mechanism for total regimentation, it should not worry him too much. He is not the one to be unduly worried by such trifles. Why can't he borrow time, buy it, beg for it, stretch it to any length to suit himself! He has done it before, and he can do it again — a pastmaster as he is at the game of the time. When he seized power in 1977, he swore before God that within ninety days he would pack up lock stock and barrel, and return to the army barracks. But he didn't, and if ninety days can be stretched to ninety months, why can't they be extended a little further. All he need to do is to dilute time with more oaths, promises and make-beliefs!

Zia has no other choice but to establish the rule of regimentation, and as a first step towards achieving his goal, he will use approaching elections to his maximum advantage. In the name of Islam — an Islam devoid of all meaning except what Zia permits it to acquire, he can rule the country with an iron hand. Islam would be his armour and his shield against every attack by the politician.

In the name of a democratically elected assembly, he will impose a house of selected henchmen upon the country. After this, the completion of the process will only be a matter of time. A totalitarian "Islamic" regime would emerge on the pattern of a Communist state, which will have a single party system.

WILL ZIA SUCCEED?

To decide whether Zia can succeed in achieving his object, one has to examine the matter in the light both of the external as well as the internal factors.

The Role of the U.S.A.:

Among the external factors, the most important one would be the attitude of the United States of America.

So far Zia seems to have succeeded in handling the U.S.A. effectively. The Regional policy of the USA is to encourage the establishment of a 'Rightist' regime in Pakistan which can also handle the Afghan problem properly. General Zia seems to have successfully exploited this situation to his complete advantage which is also of importance to the United States' Reagan Administration, viz:

a) The Afghan problem; and
b) Championing the Rightist's cause and making it appear as though he were the only one capable of delivering the goods.

With regard to the Afghan problem, his main object has been to exploit the situation to his own advantage — to receive maximum aid, and at the same time, to conceal from the world at large the real nature of this problem. He achieved these objectives by a masterly sleight of hand.

The following are the facts of the so-called Afghan problem, and its handling by the Government of Pakistan:-

1. The Afghan refugees are much less in number than the impression given to the West;
2. It is only a portion of the large aid which actually is spent or passed on to the refugees.

Yet out of this vast aid, only a small and meagre amount is doled out

to the refugees which is absolutely insufficient to meet their minimum requirements. A substantial portion of this aid is usurped by the distributing agency which, until recently, has been none other than the Jamaat-e-Islami Tufail group.

In fact the Afghan refugees are doled out rations in such small quantities per capita as cannot suffice for their genuine needs. On top of that, it is commonly complained by the refugees that whatever is given to them, is further depleted by the appointed agents of the Distributing Agency. If they do not comply with the silence, there will be no ration for them next time.

Consequently to offset this shortage, the refugees are compelled to exaggerate the number of their family members beyond all proportion to reality. For instance it is a common practice for a family of five to be registered as a family of many times that size.

This deception is benignly overlooked to the mutual benefit of all concerned. In this manner, what the refugees actually receive on the basis of this bloated numbers, is not less but more than what their number would entitle them to. By selling the surplus in the market, they thus earn extra money to meet their other needs. So the refugees are not the losers in the final analysis, nor is the government for that matter.

The government is satisfied for having effectively earned support of world opinion, and in the process, to have gained a good name, plus some extra aid to be utilised at will. Strange as it may appear, this arrangement also suits the West, because in reality, they want this problem to be highly exaggerated for propaganda purposes.

Furthermore, the way the refugee camps are run and organised, or rather disorganised, makes it very difficult if not virtually impossible, to assess the exact number, and to find out what is going on. The refugees come and go as they please; they keep shifting their camp sites in accordance with the change in the weather. Also there is a constant flow of refugees across the border in both directions. Among other things, the practice of refugees to move to the Punjab further adds to the confusion.

All said and done, Zia has handled the Afghan refugees problem dextrously. It is a tribute to him, from whichever angle one may look at

it. Even if some of the aid giving agencies become suspicious and want to investigate, it would be difficult for them to do so.

The Afghan refugees with their arms and inevitable presence of hundreds of Communist agents among them, and their freedom to move about throughout the country without any restriction, constitutes a potential danger to internal security and harmony among the people.

ZIA AND RIGHTISM

As far as the second issue is concerned, there, too, Zia seems to have emerged victorious. He has, for instance, succeeded in creating the impression that Rightism is the strongest factor in the body politic of Pakistan. And also that he, i.e., Gen. Zia himself is the popular champion of this course. The anti-Ahmadiyya movement and its so-called success broadcast to the world by beat of drum is the most effective measure employed to achieve his goal.

BEFOGGED WESTERN VIEW

Another factor which is playing its part in befogging the Western view is their misunderstanding of the term 'Rightism'. 'Rightism' as understood and applicable to the situation in Pakistan, is not at all the same thing with which the West is familiar. The Rightism of Mrs. Thatcher for instance, has no similarity whatever to the Rightism of the Mullah in Pakistan. The later is completely devoid of any economic philosophy, and all it stands for is religious fanaticism and intolerance of religious view different from their own.

This Rightism is not a universal term, but changes its meaning from situation to situation. For instance, when applied to the Afghan problem, it acquires a connotation different from the one obtained when applied to a situation in Pakistan. In Pakistan, the Rightism can easily co-exist with Leftism, creating some very interesting paradoxical situations. There are so-called religious parties in Pakistan, Majlis-e-Ahrar being a prominent example, which, in the religious philosophy, can be rightly described as extreme Rightist. But the Rightism here only means extreme intolerance of doctrinal differences in religious matters. They can be easily incited to violence over minor sectarian differences. Their concept of Rightism begins and ends there. At the same time

however, they can and generally do, adhere to a Leftist economic philosophy, and can be exploited by regimes or ideologically inspired groups.

In the Economic field however, whenever there are aspects of clash with the Rightist, they lean to Leftist sentiments and philosophy. Thus, for instance, witness how during the Elections of 1970/71, the same Rightist groups supported the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) with marked Socialist philosophy and inclinations, as against the Rightists' economic philosophy.

CHAUDHARY AFZAL HAQ AHRARI

The negative values of the Mullah's Rightism, appeal to the same masses as are attracted to the Leftist economic philosophy. The case of the Majlis-e-Ahrar can be cited as a good illustration to further elucidate this point. Ever since the founding of this politico-religious movement by the first Muslim communist leader of India, Chaudhary Afzal Haq Ahrari, the Majlis has meticulously retained its dual character of being orthodox fanatics in religious dogmas, and out and out socialists in their economic philosophy. It is the same group which is currently employed by General Zia to agitate the masses against Ahmadis for the purposes mentioned earlier.

This behaviour is not exclusive to the Ahrar alone. It can be proved beyond doubt from the past political experience in Pakistan that whenever a political choice was faced by the masses, they almost always preferred the Left and rejected the Right as an economic philosophy. But this Leftism is not powerful enough to defeat the Nationalist sentiment which, once aroused, rules supreme. It was this phenomenon which was evident during the struggle for the creation of Pakistan. Also it was the same underlying sentiment which made a hero out of Bhutto. In fact, Bhutto became the most popular hero of the masses not for any of his subsequent Leftist inclinations, but for the Nationalist role that he played during the war with India in 1965 and in its aftermath.

Another important element which is being overlooked by the Western observers is the fact that whenever Rightism is employed as a slogan by any regime in the world to perpetuate its rule against the wishes of the masses, it creates an exactly opposite reaction among the people. They

begin to move towards the opposite pole. Again it may be noted that if the Government's concept of Rightism is situated to the extreme Right, its shadow pole will be cast to the extreme Left of the centre — a ratio which is governed by scientific laws.

THE FACTORS WITHIN THE COUNTRY WHICH WILL DECIDE ZIA'S FATE:

In the light of the above it is not difficult to perceive that whereas Zia has succeeded to a very large measure to convince the West of the advantages of his 'Rightist' policies, in actual fact, the real outcome of his policies is exactly the opposite to what he claims. His policies are pushing the people of Pakistan more and more to the Left with the passage of time. The more desperate he is becoming in his conduct, the further he is pushing the masses to the Left. Yet, with the full U.S.A. backing for this regime, his ultimate ousting from power will become very difficult. The result would be that the resentment against him will continue to rise to the level of a higher threshold to detonate the explosive situation. If that point is reached, the resultant explosion will be far too big and destructive to be ignored by the world at large. The USA policy makers should be particularly aware that the entire benefit of such an explosion will be reaped by Russia. The things are moving in this direction right now. No amount of persecution of Ahmadis at the hands of the government can ever succeed in diverting the public attention from the graver political issues. It will only succeed in hastening the process and speeding up the crisis. A countrywide insurgency is imminent. Although a modern army is potentially capable of ruthlessly crushing great uprisings, it is very doubtful if the Pakistan army would have the will and motivation to go to that length. The ruthless suppression of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy — M.R.D. — in Sind should not deceive any one. In the first place, the strategy of their attitude towards the Army was defective; and in the second place, the Pakistan Army is almost entirely Punjabi, Pathan and Baluchi, with hardly any Sindhi element in it.

THE WAY OUT: Complete segregation between politics and religion

Is there a way out? What can the politician do to avert the crisis?

The straight forward and honest answer to this question is Yes; there

is a way out but it is very doubtful if the politician has the will and conviction to follow it. A battle of survival has to be waged against Mullahism and is to be won at all costs with the total ousting of the Mullah from the body politic of Pakistan.

No hostility need be shown towards The Mullah, no vengeance wrought upon him. All that is required is to send him back to where he belongs. Let him co-exist with the politician in complete peace and harmony and work for the betterment of people's morality and spiritual welfare. Let him even fight his religious wars and sectarian battles but within the norms of decency and fair play. Let him do it on his own, never under the protective canopy of the state. Help him to become respectable and show him all respect due to him, but demand from him in return respect for human values and regard for freedom of conscience.

A complete segregation is what is required between politics and religion. If the politician of today can rise to the occasion and achieve this lofty objective, then in reality he would be rebuilding a Pakistan exactly like the one conceived and created by the Qaid-e-Azam.

However, there are grave difficulties and hurdles in the way. The Mullah has got the precise measure of the politician while the politician has not got his. The Mullah knows the art of apparently playing into the hands of the politician while in reality, it is exactly the other way round. The Mullah knows the weakness of the politician, and also knows how best to exploit it. One magic word "Qadiani", and the politican will have the shakes. Why should he take up cudgel for an unpopular cause?

So the unscrupulous will argue: why not enlist the Mullah's services and sympathies to your side at the cost of an insignificant minority? Press the Mullah to your service, use his platform and his pulpit for the propagation of your cause. What a useful ally indeed would he prove? So selfless too! Apart from a little money for expenses, of course, all that he would demand in exchange would be Qadiani blood, the cheapest commodity in the medieval markets of Pakistan. It would be sheer insanity not to go for the bargain. Why to coax the Mullah to hostility against yourself, while he is so happily and joyfully engaged in munching the Ahmadiyya flesh. Why to interrupt the innocent meal at

your own peril. No animal species however civilized and domesticated, would tolerate such outrage to common decency. "Never obtrude a hearty meal", is the golden rule of the animal kingdom.

After all they are not bothered about your faith and conduct as long as you do not side with the Qadianis. What if you are an agnostic, an atheist, a non-conformist, totally disillusioned and fed up with all that religion stands for?

What if one does not say one's prayers and does not keep fast? What if one usurps the rights of others and go for the blood of the poor? What if one indulges in smuggling, promote crime, enjoy corruption, misappropriate, loot, steal, rustle, tell lies, deceive, speak foul language, commit perjury? These are one's private affairs, and pose no danger to the Mullah. The one quality that a person possess to prove himself to be a good Muslim is the quality of not being a Qadiani!

If the Mullah is so kind and accommodating as to shut his eyes to all one's faults and crimes, will it not be the height of folly and shameless ingratitude to oppose him in any manner or form? A very convincing argument, one must say, for all who have learnt to live without conscience.

What is conscience to Man after all? A mere slave, not master. This is how conscience is treated by those who have drifted far away from the shores of moral and religious values. They have gone beyond the reach of warning cries. Every storm carries them faster and farther to their ultimate destiny. They prefer to close their eyes to past experience and learn no lessons from history. Would that they had done so! Only then could they have learnt that conscience is the inbuilt warning system which neither errs nor spares those who pay no heed to it. How could they overlook the fact that every time the political process was obstructed or reversed in Pakistan with impositions of various Martial Laws, it was invariably due to the Mullah. He was the root cause of every Martial Law in the country and reversal of all political processes.

A WORD OF WARNING TO THOSE WHO PREFER TO HOB NOB WITH THE MULLAH:

Those who come to an alliance with the Mullah for their personal

ends, may not ignore the fact that the Mullah's hunger knows no satiation. It is more of a disease with him than appetite. His demands have no upper limit. Each success raises new hopes and higher goes the next volley of demands. From then on it is a plain battle between crime and conscience. In ordinary circumstances, the Martial Law can come to the aid of the politician, but at the cost of political process. But what if it is a Martial Law regime itself which is in criminal league with the Mullah, and goes on submitting to his demands, however obnoxious they be to human sensibilities, values and rights?

Is such a regime not in a position to play on an unending game with a winning and dictating hand? Theoretically, the answer to this question would be yes. But pragmatically, it is not as simple as that. There are other factors involved and things become more and more complicated. Among these factors is the mounting pressure of world opinion, a general awakening of the conscience within the country, the weakening of the instrument of coercion itself and a progressive loss of conviction as to the rationale and purpose of the whole exercise.

A POINT OF NO RETURN — A PARALLAX

A point of no return is reached beyond which there stretches only a rough precarious track of mad desperation. A parallax is created between one's own depraved values and the values of the world at large. Even one's countrymen begin to sympathise with the cause of the oppressed, despite the fact that they do not subscribe to religious views of the oppressed. They fail to understand with what intricate logic the Mullah could persuade the government to adopt a course of inhuman acts of persecution and that too in the name of Holiest of His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him! They cannot comprehend how inhuman atrocities could be attributed to, and their justification sought from, the teachings of one who was the greatest flag bearer of freedom, of justice, of fair play, of forgiveness and of all that is the noblest in man: in the name of one who indeed was given the title by the Lord of all creation as MERCY FOR THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.

Such is the time of great upheavals, of enormous trepidations, of momentous catastrophies. The Mullah and his employer, alike, become

tools in the hands of destiny. Forces of nature of such proportions are unleashed as are too powerful to be harnessed by mortal men.

What is happening right now in Pakistan illustrates the case in point. However preposterous and unbelievably abominable the Ordinance No. XX of 26th April, 1984 may appear to the outside world, to its joint authors it is a trifle, a morsel, a first taste of the dish to come which is still in the process of cooking. There is no end to their demands. To have a glimpse of what is to come, one has only to listen to a sermon of the Imam of the Shahi Mosque, Lahore, Pakistan. Thus spake he:

1. The domes of all the Ahmadi places of worship be demolished forthwith.
2. The direction of their places of worship should be so changed so that they no longer face Mecca.
3. Ahmadis should be prevented from offering their prayers in congregation.
4. They should be stoned to death one and all.

What logic there is in the remaining demands if the demand of stoning to death is to be implemented?

It is extremely significant that these obnoxious demands are being made openly from the pulpit of the Shahi Mosque whose Imam is known to be in the pay of Government. And all this is happening under the auspices of a Martial Law regime!

It could only happen if those who are broadcasting such demands with such audacity, were under the strong impression that the entire apparatus (machinery) of the present Government of Pakistan would be pressed into their service to help them achieve their nefarious object. The purpose of the exercise is none other than to add a few more years to the regime of a mortal who is already doomed anyway, and has begun to see what is coming to him; hence this desperation, this utter madness.

One cannot say how far the Army can go to perpetuate the dictatorial rule of Gen. Zia. Allah knows best.

If the worst has already happened, and the traditionally proud and independent Armed Services of Pakistan have already been subjected to

the Mullahism of Zia's brand, then alas there is no alternative left but to submit to Destiny.

If the country survived under the dark shadow of Mullahism, it would be a survival worse than death. One will have to admit that a long cruel night has set in, a visitation from the past, as it were. A gloom has ultimately settled over Pakistan, which no ray of dawn may ever penetrate. Such would be the state of despondency and sheer hopelessness staring the country in the eye.

THE END